



STORIES of HOPE

CHINA

Compassionate Care for People Living with HIV/AIDS



A nurse provides HIV education and treatment counseling at the PEPFAR-supported Pingxiang People's Hospital HIV clinic.

As one patient said, "The clinic provides a discrimination-free environment where I am able to talk to health care providers without fear."



The Hanoi-Beijing Highway is a corridor for trade, mobility and drug trafficking and has contributed to a flashpoint of HIV prevalence in Pingxiang City, Guangxi Province. Although the city is a hub with borders linking Burma, Lao PDR and Vietnam, health care services for people living with HIV/AIDS were limited before the Chinese government initiated the CARES program in early 2004. Where services were available prior to the CARES program, health care workers were uncertain how to care for people living with HIV/AIDS.

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR) provided financial and technical support to the Pingxiang People's Hospital, which worked with Guangxi Centers for Disease Control and health departments in Pingxiang and Ningming counties to establish a continuum of care model. The new continuum of care model included counseling and testing; referrals for tuberculosis screening and treatment; health assessments; treatment of opportunistic infections; antiretroviral treatment (ART); and ART adherence support and follow-up care.

Through the program, 36 physicians, nurses and laboratory personnel at the four China CARES sites received training in the clinical management of HIV/AIDS. In addition, 10 health care workers participated in a study tour to Battambang, Cambodia, to learn first-hand about their highly successful, PEPFAR-supported continuum of care program. During the launch of ART and clinical services for people living with HIV/AIDS, the Emergency Plan supported additional mentoring for Pingxiang People's Hospital staff.

As a result of the program, the attitudes of the health care staff changed dramatically from one of fear to one of compassion toward people living with HIV/AIDS. One nurse said, "I was afraid of HIV patients at the beginning. But after a period of contact with the patients, I feel that there is no difference between taking care of people living with HIV/AIDS and other patients." A patient further explained, "The clinic provides a discrimination-free environment where I am able to talk to health care providers without fear."

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

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